



Be a Force of Nature During Lightning Safety Awareness Week

The week of June 24-30 is the 12th Lightning Safety Awareness Week. Since the campaign began, the average number of lightning deaths in the U.S. has decreased from 73 to 54. That's great progress, but lightning continues to be one of the top storm-related killers in the United States and the number one weather-related cause of death in the state of Florida. In addition, lightning injures many more people than it kills and leaves some victims with life-long health problems.

Understanding the dangers of lightning is important so that you can get to a safe place when thunderstorms threaten. If you hear thunder--even a distant rumble or a crackling aloft--you are already in danger of becoming a lightning victim. Severe weather knows no boundaries and affects every individual, but that does not mean we must become victims of nature's wrath. It means now is the time to take proper preparedness actions.

The National Weather Service is doing just that by highlighting the importance of lightning safety awareness this severe weather season and calling on you to "*Be a Force of Nature.*"

Join us in becoming "A Force of Nature," and follow these steps to increase your lightning safety:

Know your risk: The best way to protect yourself from lightning is to avoid the threat. You simply don't want to be caught outside in a storm. Check the Hazardous Weather Outlook regularly for daily lightning threat information (<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/mlb/ghwo/ghwomain.php>), sign up for local alerts from emergency management officials, and get a NOAA Weather Radio.

Take action: When thunder roars, go indoors! Have a lightning safety plan, and cancel or postpone activities early if thunderstorms are expected. Get to a safe place before the weather becomes threatening. Substantial buildings and hard-topped vehicles are safe options. Rain shelters, small sheds, and open vehicles are NOT safe. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after the last thunder clap. Once indoors and away from windows, do not use corded phones and keep away from plumbing and electrical equipment, such as computers and kitchen appliances.

Be an example: Building a Weather-Ready Nation requires the action of each and every one of us. Once you have taken action, tell your family, friends, school staff and co-workers about how they can avoid the danger of lightning. Studies show that individuals need to receive messages a number of ways before acting – be one of those sources. Social media provides a good way to model preparedness actions for others.

Learn more at NOAA's Lightning Safety website: <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/>